

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1131

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

S E C R E T BONN 04198

LIMDIS

VIENNA FOR MBFR DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, PFOR, US, UR

SUBJECT: MBFR AND UPCOMING U.S./SOVIET DIPLOMACY

REF: VIENNA 2263

BEGIN SUMMARY: UPON RETURN FROM VIENNA (REFTEL) AND PRIOR TO HIS MARCH 18-19 VISIT TO WASHINGTON, ROTH COMMENTED WITH EMBOFF CONCERNING POST-EASTER PHASE OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS AND UPCOMING HIGH LEVEL U.S./SOVIET DIPLOMACY. END SUMMARY

1. ROTH SAID HIS DISCUSSIONS IN VIENNA CONFIRMED HIS VIEW THAT THE ALLIES WERE DOING QUITE WELL IN THE CURRENT SOUNDING OUT (AS OPPOSED TO NEGOTIATION) PHASE OF MBFR. DESPITE THE RECENT AND REGRETTABLE PUBLIC AIRING OF ATLANTIC DIFFERENCES, ROTH THOUGHT THE SOVIETS MUST BE QUITE IMPRESSED BY THE TIGHT NATO COHESION SO FAR IN

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VIENNA. THIS APPLIED IN PARTICULAR TO UNITED ALLIED

STAND AGAINST SINGLING OUT OF THE BUNDESWEHR OR, IN THE FACE OF THE LATEST SOVIET PLOY, THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FOREIGN (INCLUDING UK/CANADIAN AND NATIONAL FORCES.

2. IN CONSIDERING WHETHER MBFR WOULD AMOUNT TO A GENUINELY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL/MILITARY ENTERPRISE, ROTH SAID THE KEY QUESTION WOULD BE WHETHER MOSCOW COULD BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT A GROUND FORCE COMMON CEILING. ON THIS POINT, HE WAS NEITHER OPTIMISTIC NOR PESSIMISTIC. BRITISH AMBASSADOR ROSE HAD VOICED THE OPINION TO HIM THAT THE SOVIETS SEEM TO FEEL UNDER SOME TIME PRESSURE IN VIENNA AS A RESULT OF THE DEADLOCKS IN GENEVA OVER BOTH SALT AND CSCE. ROSE THOUGHT THAT BREZHNEV MIGHT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES SEEK TO MOVE AT SOME EARLY POINT TO MORE CONCRETE NEGOTIATING PHASE IN MBFR IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE ADVANTAGES OF SOVIET WESTPOLITIK.

3. ROTH SAID HE TOO HAD NOTED THAT KHLESTOV HAD PRESSED INSISTENTLY DURING INITIAL INFORMAL NEGOTIATING SESSIONS CONCERNING THE TIMING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF U.S. FORCE WITHDRAWALS. HE RECALLED KHLESTOV'S INSISTENCE THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOVIET 3-STAGE FORCE REDUCTIONS SHOULD BE COMMENCED IN 1975 AND CONCLUDED BY THE END OF 1977. ROTH SAID THESE SOVIET TACTICS RECALLED SIMILAR RUSSIAN SELF-IMPOSED DEADLINES AT HELSINKI MPT, WHICH SO FAR HAD WORKED AGAINST RUSSIAN NEGOTIATING POSITION IN GENEVA.

4. ROTH INDICATED THAT HE WOULD DURING HIS WASHINGTON VISIT SEEK TO EXPLORE CURRENT U.S. THINKING ON TACTICAL TIMING OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. REFERRING TO UPCOMING VISITS TO MOSCOW OF THE SECRETARY AND THEREAFTER THE PRESIDENT, ROTH SAID HE COULD WELL IMAGINE THAT THE U.S. MIGHT ALSO WISH TO USE SUCH HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS WITH SOVIET LEADERS TO MOVE TOWARD MORE CONCRETE PHASE OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. WHILE CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FOR UNILATERAL U.S. TROOP CUTS SEEM FOR THE MOMENT TO HAVE SUBSIDED, ROTH SPECULATED THAT U.S. LEADERS MIGHT BE
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THINKING IN TERMS OF A U.S./SOVIET POLITICAL IMPULSE TO THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS SIMILAR TO THE MAY 20, 1971 JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH SET THE BROAD PARAMETERS FOR THE SALT-I AGREEMENT OF MAY 1972.
HILLENBRAND

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